RDA orders University Town housing scheme to hand over control

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on Saturday asked the owner of the private housing scheme University Town to immediately hand over the management, administrative control and all relevant records of the scheme to it, and formed a four-member complaint cell committee.

On the directions of the Secretary, Housing Urban Development & Public Health Engineering Department (HUD&PHED), Noorul Amin Mengal, RDA Director General Kinza Murtaza took compliance action against alleged illegal activities in the University Town Housing Scheme.

The chief planner of RDA has issued a formal letter to the owner of University Town Housing Scheme, directing him to immediately hand over the management, administrative control, and all relevant records of the scheme to RDA. In the event of non-compliance, RDA will proceed to take over the housing scheme in accordance with applicable regulations, the letter read.

In addition, DG RDA Kinza Murtaza has established a dedicated complaint registration cell at RDA specifically for matters related to University Town. The cell will receive, acknowledge and process complaints submitted by allottees, residents, applicants, and members of the general public pertaining to the housing scheme.

The complaint cell comprises Director Town Planning Atif Chaudhry as convener, Deputy Director (Town Planning) Ali Raza, Assistant Director (Land Development) Abdul Rehman Saleem, and Building Inspector Kamran Shahzad Aslam as members.

Following the probe report submitted by the committee constituted to examine the affairs of University Town, RDA has issued letters to M/s University Town Pvt Ltd.

As part of disciplinary actions, three officers, two superintendents, and one draftsman of RDA have been suspended.

The suspensions were ordered due to their failure to prevent illegal activities carried out by the management of University Town Housing Scheme and for their inability to ensure effective enforcement of RDA's regulatory mandate.

Furthermore, the DG RDA has constituted a committee to conduct a comprehensive technical and financial audit of M/s University Town. — Staff Reporter

No let-up in dengue cases

RAWALPINDI: As the temperature dropped to five degrees Celsius in the garrison city, there was no let-up in dengue cases; seven new dengue patients arrived in three government-run hospitals on Saturday.

In the current year, from July to November 15, around 1,534 dengue patients were reported in the garrison city, while 17 are still admitted to the hospitals, including Holy Family Hospital, Benazir Bhutto Hospital and Rawalpindi Teaching Hospital.

A senior doctor at Holy Family Hospital told Dawn that there is no end to dengue patients in the hospitals despite the change in the weather. He said that usually, the temperature goes down to 10 degrees Celsius, then the mosquitoes' activity ends, but this year, the patients are still arriving from various areas.

He said that there was a dire need to speed up the indoor surveillance of the dengue, as the temperature in the houses is comfortable for the dengue mosquitoes. He said that people should ensure cleanliness in their houses so the dengue mosquitoes will be eradicated. He said that the dengue virus will likely end next week.

He added that the health authority should speed up the drive to end the dengue mosquitoes and larvae in the affected union council so no one is affected by the virus in the coming days.

He further stated that the hospital's dengue ward was still active and it will likely end by December. He said that more than 100 beds had been allocated for the dengue ward. — Staff Reporter

THE Eva Klesse Quartet comprising Felix Hauptmann, Tabea Kind, Evgeny Ring and Eva Klesse performs at the PNCA in Islamabad on Friday. — Photo by Tanveer Shahzad

Islamabad set to enforce e-tags for all incoming vehicles

Pilot project launched; tags to be linked with Safe City system for monitoring and security

By Munawer Azeem

ISLAMABAD: The capital administration is all set to introduce e-tags on vehicles to identify outsiders and newcomers in Islamabad, officials told *Dawn*.

The vehicles with m-tags are not required to get e-tags.

In the first phase, tags will be issued to vehicles, and in the second phase, they will also be issued to motorcycles as m-tags. The e-tag and m-tag will be made mandatory for vehicles entering the capital as well as for residents.

The e-tag and m-tag will also be linked with the Islamabad Safe City Authority for surveillance and monitoring of vehicles moving in the capital.

According to officials, the measures will empower the authorities to identify and distinguish between vehicles belonging to residents, those commuting to Islamabad on a daily basis from other parts of the country, including neighbouring cities and newcomers.

Vehicle number plates can be replaced or faked, but forged e-tags will not be usable as they will not be readable. The tag will contain details of the owner and the vehicle.

In this regard, the Islamabad Excise Department has started a pilot project and tags are being issued to vehicles at Kachnar Park in I-8 and the Excise Office in H-8.

Currently, the FWO is issuing m-tags, and from November 18, the capital administration will begin issuing e-tags to vehicles owned by residents of the capital and to those who commute to Islamabad regularly.

The number of points from where motorists can obtain e-tags will be increased from November 18. The tag is likely to cost Rs250.

In the first phase, the tag facility for vehicles has been provided at 10 locations, and the service will gradually be expanded throughout the capital.

The tag will be mandatory for every vehicle entering Islamabad or plying on its roads, irrespective of the user's residency.

A number of motorists already have m-tags issued by One Network, and such vehicles will not require the new tag, as it will be automatically integrated into the new system.

New points are being established from November 18 in different areas of Islamabad from where the tag can be obtained. The original CNIC and original vehicle registration documents are required to obtain the tag.

Earlier, talking to the media outside the Judicial Complex after a suicide attack, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said he had directed that no vehicle be allowed into Islamabad without an e-tag after two weeks.

The e-tag project was first introduced in the capital in 2013 to facilitate residents of Islamabad and Rawalpindi with hassle-free movement between the twin cities, besides addressing security-related issues, as it is issued only after verification of the person and vehicle.

The system was introduced on the directions of then Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan.

Later in 2017, the authorities concerned tested Radio Frequency Identification Devices in the capital and installed scanners at the entrances to the capital and the Red Zone. RFID was one of the features of the Safe City Project being implemented in the capital at that time.

Turkish Cyprus marks another year of struggle for peace

By Jamal Shahid

ISLAMABAD: The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) Friday marked another year of its existence as a symbol of determination and resilience, reflecting the Turkish Cypriot people's long struggle for peace, stability and identity.

The 42nd Anniversary of the proclamation of the Turkish Cyprus drew a gathering of parliamentarians, diplomats, and representatives from the business community.

Senator Sitara Ayaz, Senator Sehar Kamran, Turkiye's Ambassador Irfan Neziroglu, Kazakhstan's Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin, Sudan's Ambassador Salih Mohamed Ahmed Siddig, Uzbekistan's Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev, and Pakistani Hindu community leader Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani were prominent among those who attended the event.

Former Senator Saleem Saifullah Khan, along with representatives of Turkish and Turkish Cypriot nationals, also graced the occasion.

TURKISH Ambassador Irfan Neziroglu, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Buket Kop and other dignitaries cut a cake on the occasion of the 42nd anniversary of the proclamation of Northern Cyprus in Islamabad on Friday night. — White Star

Guests congratulated Ambassador Buket Kop and the people of the Turkish Cyprus as they marked their national day.

The ceremony began with the national anthems of Turkiye and the Turkish Cyprus, followed by a cake-cutting to celebrate the occasion. At the reception, Representative of Turkish Cyprus Buket Kop said the his country had preserved its tranquility by remaining committed to its values and with steadfast support from Turkiye.

As an observer member of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Economic Cooperation Organisation, the Turkish Cyprus had continued to expand its international footprint. Its 2022 entry into the Organisation of Turkic States further strengthened regional partnerships and cultural ties.

The Cyprus representative recalled that the Republic of Cyprus was founded as a joint partnership between Turkish and Greek Cypriots under international treaties guaranteeing the political equality of both peoples.

"Its legitimacy depended on the equal participation of both sides, yet the partnership survived only three years," she said.

"The reality is clear, Cyprus is home to two distinct peoples with different identities, languages and religions, each, exercising sovereignty over its own territory," she said. The core of the Cyprus issue, she added, remained the question of status, with the international community continuing to treat the Greek Cyprus administration as the government of the entire island while Turkish Cyprus remained isolated and unrecognised.

Buket Kop said it was time for the world to acknowledge the realities on the ground, echoing President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's call at the 79th UN General Assembly for recognition of the Turkish Cyprus an independent and sovereign state.

President Erdogan, she noted, had repeatedly urged the global community to accept that Cyprus consisted of "two states and two peoples", stressing that Turkish Cyprus will not accept a minority status.

She criticised ongoing Greek Cyprus efforts to block Turkish Cyprus participation in sports, education, trade and humanitarian activities, calling such restrictions unjust and harmful.

As Turkish Cyprus celebrated their Republic Day, she said, they renewed their call for justice and for an end to international isolation. Buket Kop also expressed gratitude to Turkiye and Pakistan for their consistent support of the Turkish Cyprus cause.

Anti-domestic violence bill promises 'stringent penalties'

Bill passed by NA proposes three-year imprisonment for offenders, offers comprehensive legal framework for victims

By Zaki Abbas

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly has passed a proposed legislation to "address and significantly" reduce domestic violence in the Islamabad Capital Territory by establishing a comprehensive legal framework to protect the victims.

The bill, approved on Thursday along with four other bills, was criticised by the JUI-F lawmakers, who questioned the haste with which the proposed legislation had been passed.

The bill, which was tabled by Sharmila Farooqui of the PPP, is now required to be passed by the Senate to formally become an act of the parliament.

The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2025 aims to establish an effective system of protection, relief and rehabilitation of women, men, transgender persons, children and any vulnerable person against domestic violence.

It also defines domestic violence, outlines preventive measures, and provides accessible legal help, besides holding perpetrators accountable through stringent penalties for their actions.

According to the bill, domestic violence includes "physical, emotional, psychological, sexual and economic abuse…against women, men, transgender [people], children, vulnerable persons, or any other person with whom the respondent is or has been in a domestic relationship that causes fear, physical or psychological harm to the aggrieved person".

The bill passed by the lower house of parliament cites data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, saying one in three women in Pakistan experiences some form of domestic abuse during their lifetime.

If the offence does not fall under the PPC, the act shall be punishable with simple imprisonment of a maximum period of three years and not less than six months and a fine of up Rs100,000 to be paid to the aggrieved person. In case of default of payment of fine, the court may award simple imprisonment of three months.

Similarly, whoever aids or abets the commission of an offence of domestic violence shall be punished with the same punishment provided for the offence, the proposed legislation added. If an aggrieved person moves the court, the court shall fix the first date of hearing within seven days and with or without issuing an interim order shall issue a notice upon the person complained against. The petition shall be decided within a period of 90 days and any adjournment shall be granted for reasons to be recorded in writing by the court.

The bill also provides the aggrieved person the right to reside in the shared household, but also says that the person may choose to reside in the house or in shelter home arranged by any service provider.

According to the bull, the court can grant an interim order at any time and stage of the petition.

"If the court is satisfied that a petition prima facie discloses that the respondent has committed an act of domestic violence or that there is a likelihood that the respondent may commit an act of domestic violence, it may issue order on the basis of an affidavit of the aggrieved person or any other evidence or material…".

In such a case, it can also pass a protection order in favour of the aggrieved person, directing the respondent not to commit any further act of domestic violence, not to have any communication in any form or manner with the aggrieved person. The order will also ask the respondent to stay away from the aggrieved person and even move out of the house in case of an act of grave violence.

The court can also restrain the respondent from dispossessing or in any other manner disturbing the possession of the aggrieved person from the household. It can also restrain the respondent or any of his or her relatives from entering the household. As per the bill, the court may require from the respondent to execute a bond, with or without sureties, for preventing the commission of domestic violence.

The bill also envisions a protection committee, comprising a representative of the "Family Protection and rehabilitation centre a representative of the National Commission on the Status of Women, a medical doctor or psychologist or psycho social worker, a law officer, and a police officer not below the rank of Inspector, preferably female, or any other officer (s) designate by the Ministry of Human Rights, is as may be prescribed by the rules and a Protection Officer who shall also act as the secretary of the protection committee".